

REMARKS

In the Office Action mailed the Examiner noted that claims 1-47 were pending, and rejected all claims. Claims 1, 2, 4 ,9 ,10, 18, 23, 26, 31 ,32, 40, and 45-47 have been amended, new claims 48 and 49 have been added and, thus, in view of the forgoing claims 1-49 remain pending for reconsideration which is requested. No new matter has been added. The Examiner's rejections and objections are traversed below.

In the Action on page 2, the Examiner objected to the drawings and the drawings have been amended in consideration of the Examiners comments and substitute drawings are enclosed herewith. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

The Examiner has also objected to the abstract which has been amended in consideration of the Examiner's comments. Withdrawal of the objection is requested.

In the Office Action the Examiner rejected identified under 35 U.S.C. section 112 paragraph 2 as indefinite. The claims have been amended in consideration of the Examiner's comments and it is submitted they satisfy the requirements of the statute. If additional concerns with the claims arise, the Examiner is invited to telephone to resolve the same. Suggestions by the Examiner are also welcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

On page 4 of the Office Action the Examiner rejected all claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as anticipated by Fujii.

Fujii is directed to a system that performs fingerprint comparison by of lengths of or distances on a ridge between a target feature point and a neighboring feature point.

Thus, by comparing the distances on ridges, it can be determined whether or not feature points match. Since the distance on a ridge does not almost vary against a distortion of a fingerprint, a feature point can be stably identified.
(See Fujii, col. 5, lines 33-36)
In addition, Fuji compares corresponding ridge lengths of ridge adjacent and next adjacent the target ridge with a ridge. To make such a comparison requires that the apparatus store relatively large amounts of data.

In contrast, the present invention compares feature points not ridge lengths. In doing so the present invention compares feature points in the fingerprints corresponding to a target feature point. The invention also compares "vicinal" feature points (see claims 1, __ and __). Vicinal feature points are feature points in the local neighborhood of the target feature point:

vicinal Function: adjective Etymology: Latin vicinalis, from vicinus neighbor, from vicinus, adjective, neighboring 1 : of or relating to a limited district : LOCAL 2 : of,

relating to, or substituted in adjacent sites in a molecule <a vicinal disulfide group>

(See Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary copyright © 2004 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated)

By comparing feature points instead of ridge lengths the amount of data storage required is reduced as compared to Fujii.

It is submitted that the present claimed invention patentably distinguishes over Fujii and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

The dependent claims depend from the above-discussed independent claims and are patentable over the prior art for the reasons discussed above. The dependent claims also recite additional features not taught or suggested by the prior art. For example, claim 4 emphasizes counting ridges as part of the determination of a whether a match exists. It is submitted that the dependent claims are independently patentable over the prior art.

New claims 48 and 49 emphasize the comparison of feature points of ridges including the comparison of neighboring ridge feature points as well as other information about the feature points such as direction. Nothing in the prior art teaches or suggests such. It is submitted that these new claims distinguishes over the prior art.

It is submitted that the claims satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 112. It is further submitted that the claims are not taught, disclosed or suggested by the prior art. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. An early Notice of Allowance is requested.

If any further fees, other than and except for the issue fee, are necessary with respect to this paper, the U.S.P.T.O. is requested to obtain the same from deposit account number 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 3/04

By: 
J. Randall Beckers
Registration No. 30,358

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501